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IT is not our custom to indulge in London dramatic criticism, but on the occasion of the opening of a new theatre, and the first appearance in London of an old Manchester favourite, the production of the best piece of a rising dramatic author who is now performing in our own town, we, perhaps, may be allowed to make a short digression into the metropolis. On Saturday week, a very pretty little theatre, the Globe, was opened in Newcastle-street, Strand, at which was produced a new comedy, written by Mr. Henry J. Byron, and entitled *Cyril's Success*.

Mr. Byron has not lately been happy in his choice of titles. He has fallen into women's. Ladies almost invariably call their novels *Somebody's Something*. They can't keep their heroes and heroines out of their title pages; and a weak, washy, uninteresting, unsatisfactory, namby-pamby title is the invariable result. *Sylvia's Lovers*, *Esther's History*, *Mabel's Progress*. Who is *Sylvia?* Hang *Sylvia*. Who is *Esther?* Blow *Esther*. Who is *Mabel?* Choke *Mabel*. We know nothing about them; and don't care a straw for their *Lovers*, *Histories*, or *Progresses*. Thus the public is put out of patience for the sake of a wretched title. It was through the merest accident that Mr. Byron did not jeopardise his previous drama by calling it *John Denman's Debt;* and now, utterly disregarding the moral of a special interposition of providence (in the shape of a veritable John Denman, who considered that the association of his sacred name with a debt would damage his commercial credit), deliberately goes and calls his next adventure, *Cyril's Success!* Who on earth is *Cyril*, and what right has he to succeed, when honest people can't? One hates *Cyril*, by anticipation. If there is one thing more calculated than another to make you not go to a play, surely it is for that play to be called *Cyril's Success*. It was some time before we could prevail upon ourselves to go and see a piece with such a title. Abundance of bad titles there are in the world, but Mr. Byron seems to have hit upon the precise combination of letters which is most adapted to deter one from going to the drama, and to prevent one from alluding to it without a twinge, after one has been. Luckily the play is better than its name. It is, beyond doubt, Mr. Byron's masterpiece as yet; but he will excel it. He is steadily improving, and as he gets more and more legitimately celebrated, he will get more of his own way, and will feel a greater weight of responsibility in writing. *Blow for Blow*—thank mercy, not *John Denman's Debt*—was an improvement on the *Lancashire Lass*, inasmuch as it was free from illegitimate sensations; for which, however, we are not disposed to censure Mr. Byron much. We dare say he despises his own steamer quite as much as we do, if the truth were known. But *Blow for Blow* was disfigured horribly with hideous puns—the natural sediment of the authorship of a number of burlesques, sufficient, if put to the irproper use, to cook their writer's dinner for a year to come. We only noticed one in *Cyril's Success*. It ought to be struck out at once. We can quite understand that it is very difficult for Mr. Byron to resist perpetrating these enormities; but he must do it, even though abstinence from indulgence in his favourite weakness may make "the time hang heavy on his hands"—like Pincher's pinchbeck watch. Nobody enjoys puns but their maker; they only move sense to contempt; punning is nothing less than literary vice. In good dialogue, like that of *Cyril's Success*, one grinds one's teeth against a pun like a stone in a plum pudding. When Mr. Byron feels tempted to insert one, let him think how one would sound in such a play as, say, the *School for Scandal*. Would Moses have been made to pull out a big watch, in order that Charles might ask him if the time hung heavy on his hands—supposing the pun had occurred to Sheridan. No. He would have scouted the idea with as much indignation as Luther's when he flung his inkstand at the tempter. But Mr. Byron does not aim so high as Sheridan. That is his mistake. He shoots too low. He obviously cannot get over Mr. T. W. Robertson. The last act of his new play is Mr. Robertson all over. Now Mr. Robertson is very good, but Mr. Robertson is not perfection; and moreover, half his charm consists in his originality. Therefore, he is not a man to make a model of. But Mr. Byron will make a model of him. It is a poor return for Mr. Clarke's excellent playing in the first four acts, to make him enter the fifth with a basket of market produce, and cook chops. Mr. Byron may say that he has just as much right to make Mr. J. Clarke cook chops as Mr. Robertson had to make Miss Louisa Moore baste a leg of mutton. Perhaps so: but, fond as Mr. Robertson is of introducing cookery into his plays, we venture to hint to Mr. Byron that chops are not exactly high-class comedy, and that onions are scarcely the legitimate drama. Of course this sort of thing makes people laugh, but that has nothing whatever to do with it. Mr. Byron will never do any good, unless he gives over writing for applause. He has too much respect for the public. He pays it too much consideration. If Mr. Byron would only despise the public, he would make a capital dramatist. As it is, whenever anything occurs to him as likely to provoke a laugh, he forces it into his dialogue, whether it will fit or not. His points often do not proceed naturally out of his plot. When he wants to write a little smartness, he starts his characters on a conversation that has nothing whatever to do with the story. In *Cyril's Success*, he has so little tale to tell that he is tempted to do this all the more; but whether he is busy with his plot or not, if he happens to think of anything funny, in it goes. Thus, the situation in the third act—where two indignant ladies imagine they discover that they both have been deceived by one and the same man—is spoilt by Mr. Byron's inability to resist sacrificing the pathos of his heroine's grief to his sense of the ludicrousness of the situation. This act "took" the best of all; and is called the best by the London critics: it is the worst. Mr. Byron is too fond of fun; this weakness tempts him over the boundary of comedy into farce. He neglects the serious interest in this play, and thinks pathos consists in the repetition of the last few words of the meant-to-be-pathetic speech. A stern revision of the third and last acts would turn a mediocre comedy into a good one. But the greatest transformation of all would be effected, if Mr. Byron could only rid the piece of a slight aroma of vulgarity, reference to which fault has already been made in these columns. Meat only just tainted is spoilt. But there are many good points about this piece. It is interesting, it is lively, it is characteristic, it is witty, it is wholesome. Its many allusions to literary matters—which the London press declares the public will not take to—are, in our opinion, just what the public will like. Law and literature the public loves to dabble in. The alternate reading of the two antipodal reviews—which the *Pall Mall* esteems superfluous—is, we think, an admirably trenchant and dramatic episode.

The piece is capitally acted. Mr. Clarke is artistic, as he always is; and his make-up is wonderful. Mrs. Stephens plays perfectly a character that mars the piece. Miss Henrade is as ladylike as Mr. Byron will allow her to be. Mr. Vernon acts too well to be called Cyril. Mr. Fisher ably performs a character about which Mr. Byron has evidently kept changing his mind; first thinking he would make him an out-and-out

villain, then thinking he would not make him so bad after all—as the form of his plot varied in his imagination—and ending by making a villain at first, a decent fellow in the middle, and a Methodist parson at last. As the plot now stands—and we venture to guess it took a much more tragic form when first it shaped itself in Mr. Byron's mind—there is no strong reason why he should be bad; and it would be more natural if he were not, and better.

We should think our notice of this London play amply justified, if it were only to record the triumph of the first appearance of Miss Maggie Brennan on the London stage. Miss Brennan made her in *début* frock-coat and trousers, but in perfect taste as well. A young man was never better acted by a young woman, or better looked. She played her part with the greatest spirit, yet without the least exaggeration. She did not swagger—as women in men's clothes are apt to do—yet made the perkiest little man conceivable. She deserved the success she had, and she had the success she deserved. When Mr. Byron returns to London, no doubt he will let Miss Brennan know that the way to keep her scarf down behind is to tuck it under the collar button. Miss Brennan was the last of that little set of actresses who acted in our Theatre Royal at the time when it was not a martyrdom to go there. Her companions left us long ago. Now she has left us. They long ago distinguished themselves in London. She will do the same. To own three of the nicest actresses upon the London stage, is a gratification; but it is hardly a consolation. We want another Brennan, and we want two other Moores. O, dreary Theatre Royal stalls, the barren stage before you justifies your desolation. O, faded crimson drops, blush till you're red again! O, filthy chandelier, weep till tears cleanse thee!

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH.

[THE REV. W. A. DARBY.]

IN his inaugural address to the students of Edinburgh University, speaking of endowment for educational purposes, Mr. Carlyle said it was a noble thing on the part of rich men to found institutions whereby poor men might be raised out of the dirt and mud where they were getting trampled on unworthily, and placed in circumstances whereby they might be of service to their generation. Without entering into the question of the relative value of religious or secular teaching, it may be admitted that it is also a noble thing when private wealth is employed to provide a church wherein poor men are free to worship. The present church of St. Luke, Chorlton-upon-Medlock, is an illustration of this, though it is not entirely a free and open one. For about sixty years it was represented by an edifice of small and ugly proportions, on the model of many others still existing as memorials of the dark ages of ecclesiastical architecture, and which Mr. Palgrave describes as "a plain brick box, with square windows, and a square pigeon-house over one end; inside, a series of uniform painted deal packing-cases, with one larger than the rest in the middle." Three years ago the old building was abolished, and the present one erected on its site, at the sole expense of the late Mr. Robert Gardner. How far it has been appreciated hitherto by those for whom it was intended in a great measure to benefit remains to be seen. It is a handsome church, in the decorated Gothic style, with a fine spire. The exterior presents some good specimens of carving in the shape of quaint gurgoyles. In the interior, however, it is rather a one-sided affair, having a nave, chancel, and but one aisle on the north side. There are fine painted windows at the east and west ends; all the seats are of oak, and there is a good organ of sweet and powerful tone. The general appearance is simple, chaste, and beautiful. On the north side, near the chancel, there is a monument erected to Liverseege, the painter, a native of this city who, under adverse circumstances, attained considerable eminence in his art. The tablet is by Mr. Marshall Wood, and the cost was defrayed by subscription among the friends and admirers of Liverseege. It represents the Muse of Painting mourning the loss of her son, and laying a wreath upon his tomb. His remains were deposited in the old churchyard, somewhere near where the tablet is placed. The church has a small gallery at the west end, and is capable of seating 740 persons. Of these seats 323 are free. It is surrounded by a large population, many of whom are exceedingly poor, yet, in spite of the attractions of a fine building and a good service, if the experience of two visits may be accepted as a criterion, the congregation is lamentably small. On each occasion when we visited it there could not have been more than a hundred persons present. The service is well conducted with the aid of a fair choir.

The Rev. W. A. Darby, M.A., the rector, is a gentleman whose name in days gone past was associated with public discussions relating to the Papacy and its aggressions on the Established Church. At that time, as the champion of the Church on Evangelical grounds, he was remarkable for his disposition to detect Jesuitical plots in unsuspected quarters. Though still a zealous watchman over the integrity of the Establishment, there are those who say that with the new church "a change has come o'er the spirit of his dream," and as evidence of this, point to certain high church proclivities in the substitution of a more elaborate ritual for the once simple service. In a recent paper entitled *A Plain View of Ritualism*, Mr. Francis T. Palgrave endeavours to show that the attempts at a more effective rendering of the English service is the natural consequence of an improvement in church architecture and decorations; that increased display of an æsthetical kind in the building and furniture must in most cases be followed by a corresponding change in the ceremonial. If such a change has taken place at St. Luke's, we are inclined to think it is explainable on these grounds, and is more harmless than some people are disposed to admit.

The Rev. W. A. Darby cannot be said to possess the qualifications which go to make a popular preacher. His voice is harsh and guttural, with just sufficient of the Hibernian tone in it to denote his nationality, and his manner in the pulpit is somewhat awkward. He is, nevertheless, a man of great energy, and undoubtedly belongs to the church militant. Reading, preaching, or moving about with great and unwearied strides through his parish in his work of visitation, his straight, stalwart form always reminds one of the soldier-priest, or of that good parson of whom old Chaucer says,—

> Wide was his parish and houses fer asonder,
> But he cared nought for rain nor thonder
> In sickness and in mischief to visite
> The ferrest in his parish high or low.
> This noble ensample to his shepe he gave
> That first he wrought, and afterwards he taught.

Naturally disposed to theological controversies, Mr. Darby is of a necessity argumentative. Devoutly believing, also, that the State connection is necessary to the safety and well-being of the Church, there is a strong political element in his constitution, which found varied expression during the late election. We heard him, for example, devote a lengthy sermon to a defence of the Establishment in Ireland, in the course of which, after describing the faithful few of the Protestant Church in that island as a persecuted race, he maintained the right of the ministry to rule in this case, and adduced historical parallels in this country under the Protectorate, and in France during the Revolution, to show that any separation of the Church from its old ties was a separation of the national faith from the national life, and must inevitably be followed, as in the instances named, by immorality, infidelity, and anarchy; like a second Cassandra prophesying woe if the enemies of the State Church succeeded in their evil efforts at the present time. It is not within our province to discuss these points here, but a sermon like this may

serve to indicate the tone and bent of Mr. Darby's mind. Doubtless, he is not without many excellences as a preacher, and earnestness, at least, is one of them; but, whatever his defects or peculiarities, it cannot wholly explain the apparently scanty number of his hearers, especially if any regard is had to the words of good George Herbert,—

> Resort to sermons, but to prayers most,
> Praying's the end of preaching.

There is a deep significance in the fact that a handsome church, upon which sacred art has been lavished to make it attractive, should fail to draw those for whom it is intended. Such a building should be crowded, in the free part of it at any rate. A certain amount of culture is necesary to appreciate the æsthetical beauties of such a church and service, and it would seem that at present, at least, the quaint carvings, the floral emblems, the cunning traceries, and,—

> Storied windows richly dight,
> Casting their dim religious light,

though in themselves rather matters of taste than religion, are, to a great extent, ineffectual in accomplishing the result desired.

OUR SOCIAL SKETCH-BOOK.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

> Then ring in the wind, my wedding chimes,
> Smile, villagers, at every door;
> Old churchyard, stuff'd with buried crimes,
> Be clad in sunshine o'er and o'er;
> And youthful maidens, white and sweet,
> Scatter your blossoms far and wide,
> And with a bridal chorus greet
> This happy bridegroom and his bride.—ALEX. SMITH.

SAMUEL BAMFORD, in describing his marriage, quietly remarks, "So I was married, and I was happy." Bamford's troubles were yet to come, and he had to pass through scenes of turbulence; but, so far as his connubial arrangements were concerned, we may be assured that the tranquil satisfaction which ought to become the heritage of a man on his marriage, was his. The hackneyed expression, "This is the happiest day of my life," which is expected to come from the lips of a bridegroom on his wedding-day, may not be always literally accurate and correct, and subsequent events may prove that the speaker was labouring under a passing hallucination. Nevertheless, it is a phrase worthy of acceptation. If it is not the happiest day of his life, at least the world assumes that it is, and likes to hear him say that it is so. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and the bridegroom is about to make a fresh start.

> To-night I shake hands with the past;
> Familiar years, adieu, adieu!
> An unknown door is open cast—
> An empty future, wide and new,
> Stands waiting.

Assuming, then, in its fullest sense, that a man's marriage-day is the happiest of his life, and that such weddings as those of Petruchio and Kate the Curst, or the Duke Aranza and Juliana, are merely exceptional homilies which prove the rule, and are to be reckoned with that extravagant fable of the husband who, on his arrival at home with his wife, seized the poker and slew the cat, to show that he was master in his own house, we may proceed with a clear conscience to notice a few of the trifling annoyances and miseries which encompass a bridegroom, merely to warn him that there can be no such thing as unadulterated bliss, even on the eve of his wedding, or, possibly, during that rapturous period of spoonification—the honeymoon.

We shall suppose our bridegroom to be a young man of the middle class, with a very moderate income, but sufficient, with economy, to keep a small family in comfort. For further illustration, let us suppose him to be a Manchester man—commercial or professional, it matters little. Benedick has been engaged some time, and his hopes are about to be consummated. His courtship, with a few cloudy exceptions, has been, on the whole, a delightful period of his existence. In some respects, the raptures of that delicious time equal, if they do not exceed, the transports of the honeymoon, which are apt to become monotonous. To use the present tense, some of Benedick's chiefest pleasures before marriage consist in looking into his mistress's eyes, in paying constant visits to jewellers, sellers of gloves, and horticulturists' shops, to secure gifts and presents. Indeed, such presents quite lose their novelty, and Beatrice is obliged to remonstrate, and tell Benedick that he is only wasting his money upon Mr. Silver Smith, Mr. R. S. Yates, and other most respectable tradesmen. If Beatrice is of a flirty and skittish disposition, our bridegroom has had occasional pangs of the most Othello-like jealousy, which have rent his soul in twain. On the other hand, she may be one of those gushing, demonstratively-affectionate creatures who never leaves poor Benedick alone, but is always, in a figurative, and often in a literal sense, throwing herself into his arms—making herself too cheap, in fact. If so, there is a terrible probability that, after marriage, there may be a turning of the tables, and the poor husband be unmercifully henpecked. It is, however, as the marriage-day approaches that Benedick's petty annoyances begin. Beatrice is growing nervous, and pleads for further delay. Benedick has had enough of that sort of thing, and is inexorable. Beatrice pouts, and Benedick is disposed to sulk. After a slight tiff and a delightful reconciliation, they make it up, the day is finally settled, and the affair is to come off immediately. It now seems as if all our bridegroom's business engagements were crowding upon him at the very time he had fixed for his holiday. He has not a moment to spare, and can scarcely call his soul his own. If he is a professional man—say a doctor, for instance—the quick and the dead seem to enter into a conspiracy against him at about the only time when he desires universal health to prevail. All the players on this sublunary stage seem to be making their exits and their entrances at once. The old are shuffling off this mortal coil, and even unborn babes are giving warnings of their approach. Mothers that are, and mothers who are about to be, are nervous and importunate, and Medicus is at his wit's end. It is really a hard case when a man cannot find time to be present at his own marriage. We think it was Sir William Follett, or some equally eminent lawyer, who was so engrossed with business that, after the ceremony of his marriage, he was obliged to go to his chambers, where he was sometimes in the habit of sleeping when deeply engaged with a case. On this occasion, having sat up half the night, he forgot that he had been married, and they had to send for him to come home, and found him in bed.

At last, however, the bridegroom has got through his engagements and difficulties. Mercator has paid his bills, and got his business pretty straight. Medicus has cured some of his patients, mollified others, and fairly turned his back on the rest, leaving them to a brother professional. At this stage, on the very eve of the ceremony, another series of petty troubles set in. The bridegroom has had no time to look after preliminaries. He has forgotten that a certificate is necessary, and with great difficulty obtains one in time. Had it not been for a gentle hint from Beatrice he would certainly have neglected to provide the ring, and only gets it by favour of the jeweller at a late hour. On the day before the wedding he hurries off to the Manchester Carriage Company and orders six carriages with grey horses, drivers, and footmen, to convey the wedding guests to and from the Cathedral, for which piece of extravagance he suspects himself to be a fool, and wonders why they couldn't walk a few yards to the adjoining church and get quietly spliced, instead of spluttering through the streets, amid a crowd of grinning specta-

tors. At another hint from Beatrice he goes into Corporation-street and orders a bouquet as big as a cauliflower for the bride, and half-a-dozen of less dimensions for the bridesmaids, for which fleeting adornments he pays fabulous sums. For the last few evenings of his bachelorhood, notwithstanding his press of business, he has been forced to share the convivialities of his friends at untimely hours. He is bilious in consequence, and having gone off his sleep, is on the high road to brain fever, and his chronic state is one of the fidgets. The very last preparation which he makes previous to the ceremony is to get his hair cut, which operation, having been neglected for some time, has such a startling effect upon his personal appearance, that his friends scarcely know him when he turns up at the altar.

The eventful day has at length arrived, and our bridegroom, who has been sitting up until a very late hour with his best man, who has come from a distance to see him turned off, is up betimes, feeling queer about the eyes, and anything but up to the mark. He is apt to be more nervous and absent in mind than ever, and as he dons a suit of clothes which have only arrived early in the morning from the tailor, he anathematizes their abominable newness, and, as he looks at his cropped head in the glass, he is by no means on good terms with himself. We knew a bridegroom who was so absent and flurried on his wedding morning that he marched down stairs carrying the water jug instead of his hat, and another who rang and called for a piece of cheese instead of soap. He finds his best man, who has slept like a top, in the highest spirits and doing justice to an early breakfast. Benedick swallows a cup of tea, but, although he feels as empty as a drum, he cannot eat a morsel. Best man rallies him, tells him what cash he will require as douceurs for parson, clerk, gate-keepers, door-keepers, apparitors, old women, coachmen, footmen, housemaids, and the rest of the motley crowd that wait upon weddings. Bridegroom groans aloud, and mutters something not loud but deep. Finally, he hands over to best man a considerable sum of money, asking him for heaven's sake to do the correct thing, and let him hear no more of it. Having reached the Cathedral, where, by an ingenious fiction, bridegrooms are said to lead their brides to the hymeneal altar, whereas the service expressly requires them to be given to them, he and his friend find that they have arrived much too soon; but, by way of squaring matters, as the bride's party arrives as much too late, ample time is afforded to survey Humphrey Chetham's monument, to flit about the sacred edifice, to get stared at by the spectators, and to cast nervous glances towards the doors and gates to see if they are coming. He is beginning to make up his mind that the bride has changed her mind, or had a fit, or that he is about to share the fate of young Frank of Errington in the ballad of *Jock o' Hazeldean*, when a bustle is heard, and the bridal party enters. Reassured, Benedick screws his courage to the sticking place, and just glancing at Beatrice, he perceives that she is pale as marble, rather red about the eyes, and that there is just the slightest suspicion of the same tint about the tip of her nose, for bridal costumes, at an early hour in a damp climate, are rather trying. From the time that the bride arrives, the bridegroom sinks into insignificance. At the marriage of the Prince of Wales, it was said that during the few trying minutes in which His Royal Highness stood alone, robed, gartered, and blazing with orders, he was the observed of all observers, but, the instant the Princess Alexandra appeared, the attention which the gorgeous assembly had bestowed upon the Prince was immediately dispelled, and the Princess became the cynosure of all eyes.

As the opening sentences of the marriage service strike upon the bridegroom's ear, and he hears the sweet responses of the maiden by his side, he rallies at once, his nerves seem turned to steel, and as he rolls forth his own responses in a clear, loud voice, he feels that he has entered on a new existence. The ceremony over, he salutes his wife, the register is signed, and, amid a buzz of congratulations, he escorts her to the gate, hands her into the carriage, draws down the blinds, and gives her another kiss, whereupon she very sensibly tells him that will do, and asks him to pull the blinds up again.

Our friend's troubles now are over. As Sam Bamford said, "he is married, and he is happy," but, though married, he is still the lover, and

> A lover may bestride the gossamers
> That idle in the wanton summer air
> And yet not fall.

As for vexations and annoyances, pooh! away with them; he rather likes them; what's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba? Nevertheless he resolves to assist his wife to get rid of some foolish phantasies which have taken possession of her. We shall pass over the wedding breakfast, which the bridegroom gets over with the greatest coolness and indifference. In fact he has been quite eclipsed by his best man, with whom and kindred subjects we hope shortly to have the pleasure of dealing in another paper. So far as Benedick himself is concerned, he feels himself higher by inches. He has weighed anchor and is afloat upon an ocean of satisfaction. His are "the wet sheet, and the flowing sea, and the wind that follows fast, and fills the white and rustling sail, and bends the gallant mast," which the sailor loves. He is the soldier returning with the spoils of victory, and the badge of valour on his breast. Yielding to the wishes of his wife, he resolves to travel as if they had been married some time. Accordingly he attires himself in an old suit of clothes, and she in a modest travelling dress. Vain thought! The cabman who drives them to the station of course knows all about it, and charges accordingly. A monster of a railway guard suggests a coupé! "Coupé be——, well, much obliged," says Benedick, "but we always travel in the ordinary carriages," and the guard is observed speaking to his mate and pointing backwards with his thumb over his shoulder, as much as to say, "Think I can't spot 'em at once?" Their fellow-passengers likewise "see it at a glaunce," as Mr. Toole would say, so our turtle doves give up practising the deception. As for Benedick, he likes the publicity of it. He *is* a newly married man, and he likes the world to know that he is so, and that the young, fresh lass beside him is his wife. The hotel people likewise recognise them before they have been in the place five minutes. In fact, hotel people rather like newly married folks, who pay well, are modest, and give little trouble. Even the old wry-necked waiter, whose province it is to attend to newly married folks, puts them quite at their ease, and anticipates all their wants. By the time that our friends have got well through their marriage trip, they have got over all their squeamishness, and, when they return, the bride is even censured by some of her unmarried friends for assuming consequential married airs. As for Benedick, he might have been married these fifty years.

MINOR STARS AT THE PRINCE'S THEATRE.

LAST week we headed our article on the Prince's Theatre Company "Mr. Toole." We did not ignore Mr. Toole's suite, only we intentionally devoted an article entirely to Mr. Toole. In the present short notice we wish to express our appreciation of Mr. and Mrs. Billington and Mr. Joseph Eldred, and also of the example set by the Prince's Theatre of engaging several respectable planets to revolve round the brilliant fixed star. Nothing could well be more inartistic than the starring system which prevails in the provinces. A good actor, surrounded by the average stock company of a country theatre, is like an old coat patched with a square piece of glossy broad cloth. Not only does the patch never look like anything but a patch, but the old coat looks unusually old. Mr. Billington is an eminently respectable actor; he is experienced, self-possessed, and gentleman-like. Mrs. Billington is as superior to Mr. Billington as a woman—all else being equal—is superior to a man. She is not merely respectable—she evinces a fine tact. She is not merely self-possessed—she is quite naturally undisturbed. She is not merely lady-like—she is womanish. Mr. Joseph Eldred is a clever young actor; his makes-up are singularly successful. He must not, however, forget that the exaggeration demanded in the delineation of eccentric characters, such as Uncle Ben and the Major, in *Ici on Parle Français*, is less difficult than the unexaggerated truth with which Mr. Toole sways his audience in Caleb Plummer and Michael Garner.

DERWENTWATER.

Sweet among hours, and I have had my sweet ones,
Sad among hours, and sad ones have been mine,
Was that whose pinions over me did fleet once
With strange flight and divine.

Evening it was, and Autumn ;—Death had caught her,
Summer's young sister, by the golden hair ;—
So thought I, seeing gold, round Derwentwater,
Of dead leaves everywhere.

Peace on that sombre eve the world was holding,
Still were the songless woods ; a flag outflung
On windy Skiddaw would, itself refolding,
Around its staff have clung.

But, while Time broke the strings of the year's lute, he
Drew music forth which did my mood control ;
It seem'd as tho' that lake's depth, breadth, and beauty
Were poured upon my soul.

The power of the silence of the mountains,
The awe that dwelleth in them, high and far,
The whirling of the wan leaves, where the fountains
Swiftest and loneliest are ;

The evening, sunless, and like one forsaken,
Not weeping, but with tearful eyes, and bow'd;
The bees forgotten by the bronzèd bracken,
The universal cloud ;

The sodden ways, the obliterated prints of
Summer's bright feet from Latrigg to Lodore,
The sunlight's absence, darkening the tints of
That emeraldine shore ;

The mist that found no flowers in the meadows,
The gathering night that scarce did colour change
Of Skiddaw, reft of rapid lights and shadows,
Now that the sun was strange ;

Memory's sweet sigh that doth the soul's breath trammel,
Hope, burying beneath dead leaves her smiles,
The lake, a sheet of dim and black enamel,
And quiet as its isles ;

The great grey mountain-gaps, the scarlet hedges,
The high peaks soaring in the eagle's wake,
And, where brown flag-leaves hide the water-wedges,
The silence of the crake—

These influences gave me, far from men, the
Dreams I hold dear, and, on that sombre eve,
Held to my soul's lips a more rich nepenthe
Than ever did deceive

My weariness before, tho' I had driven
By Derwentwater oft the world away,
When, 'neath blue evening, Skiddaw's summits seven
Like one rose-garden lay ;

When light on land and lake fell, and was splendour,
And bees flew homeward, heavy from the ling,
And Time's love, Summer, cast, in sweet surrender,
Her purple on his wing.

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN BRIGHT.

MR. BRIGHT'S accession to office has been received with approbation both by his friends and opponents. The right honourable gentleman is the first Quaker who has become a cabinet minister. Mr. Charles Gilpin, also a member of the Society of Friends, occupied a post in the last Liberal Government, but he was not in the cabinet. Mr. Bright has a good presence and a comely countenance, and would look well in court costume ; but if he cannot overcome his scruples on this point, we hope certain formal restrictions which now exist may be modified, so that the President of the Board of Trade may be able to give his attendance at court ceremonies, along with the other ministers. It is not desirable that any one of the Queen's advisers should be isolated or debarred from paying his respects to Her Majesty on State occasions. In the debates of the House of Commons, members may allude to Mr. Bright as "their right honourable *Friend*," in more senses than one.

ON THE RIALTO.

THE STATE OF TRADE.

WINTER, in its most Lancashire aspects, has settled upon the Rialto. The Nose-Flatteners gaze into perennial drizzle, intensified at times into fog: and, instead of having their eyes delighted with brilliant skirts and trim ancles at the crossings, nothing but a succession of sloppy draggle-tails rewards their patient watch. The boards themselves have become a species of Lombardy or Holland, irrigated by innumerable canals, ducts, and lakelets, from countless umbrellas. An unpleasant flavour of wet wood hangs about; and, were one to shut one's eyes and forget one's whereabouts, one might fancy himself in a circus, with a leaky roof, at a rainy fair time. This flavour is, however, on accurate observation, modified by the rival aroma of damp humanity prevailing, and there are connoisseurs who can detect and pick out the several scents arising, as Coleridge counted and distinguished the "two and seventy" stenches of the ancient city of Cologne. These will take you up into the gallery and say—"That arises from a soaked Oldhamer. That from a drenched Darwener. That more delicate West of England waft is from a slightly sprinkled shipper. While that one, more fierce than any, and almost visible in steam, proceeds from the representatives of Snigbruck, in whom is waging a conflict between inner and outer moisture, and in whose classic garments the evening's entertainment is meeting the morning's rain."

But dull as is the winter without, depressing as are the physical and material concomitants, winter has settled upon the Rialto in a far worse form. It has fastened upon its trade ; it has entered into the hearts, minds, and spirits of every human being who gains his livelihood on its boards, by direct connection with "that important staple"—Mr. Bazley be hanged ! let us have plain English—with cotton. Black Care has taken his seat upon the producer's back, and the producer will not shake him off. *Frau Unglück*, Mother Misfortune, has paid the Rialto one of her characteristic visits. Madame Goodluck, says Heine, pays you a flying visit when she calls, leaves her card, drops a curtsey and a smile, and is off again ; but Mother Misfortune, a much more substantial, Dutch-built, leisurely Dame, when she calls, she plumps down by your bedside, smooths her apron, pulls out her work bag, and *knits*. In every place where yarn is spun or cloth woven, and by the side of every man who has to sell or to buy it, there she sits knitting at this moment ; knitting away their capital, their bricks and mortar, and their machinery ; knitting in sorrow to their hearts, knitting out all prospects of a merry Christmas.

It is the last hair which breaks the camel's back—and the last hair is now being laid upon Lancashire. This is the oriental form of the proverb, and perhaps its more homely paraphrase, which substitutes a last stick and the back of a donkey, is more appropriate to the district and the circumstances. For if ever there was a crisis on the Rialto, a period of loss, of ruin, and of attendant gloom and heartache, which was not sent by Providence, nor by chance, nor by any external, political, governmental, or foreign entanglement, but simply and solely by the infatuation, the obstinacy, the folly, the recklessness, and selfishness of the sufferers themselves, this is it. It has been long foreseen, long prophesied, and the prophets never met with a gainsayer. The trade was drifting towards it as visibly, and as certainly, and as deliberately as a parliamentary train goes to its destination. There was no accident, no misfortune, no outside deranging powers to grumble at ; every person in the trade has gone on at his own will and pleasure, with eyes wide open, perfectly well knowing whither he was going, and the inevitable end. It is too late to recover years of incessant losses from chronic madness, but it is not too late to sound the whistle ere it deepens into the

crash of panic, and into general ruin and disaster. And as the great *Times* cannot, because it habitually knows less of Lancashire and the Cotton Trade than it does of the domestic economy of Timbuctoo, and as the local daily press will not sound this whistle of alarm, we must.

We purpose asking a few brief questions and giving a few brief answers; and then seeking further opportunities of entering into the whole subject more at length.

First.—What is the state of trade on our Rialto, and in the districts which are therein represented? For years now, there has hardly ever been a pound of yarn or a piece of cloth sold that, at the price of raw cotton on the day, could be produced at other than a most serious loss. Agent, spinner, and manufacturer have all known this, and have all admitted it. Where loss has been evaded, or profit made, it has been from speculative purchases or sales; but as the luckiest speculator was sure to be wrong at least one time in three, and the losses in such ventures are always twice as great as the profits, it has amounted to much the same thing in the end as if the speculator had bought from hand to mouth, and plodded on towards ruin like the rest. Meanwhile, the purchaser of these goods, bought at a loss to the producer, has been in no better plight. He has sent them to markets which did not want them at the price, which promised him severe losses, and which in nine cases out of ten faithfully kept their promise. That has been the condition of the cotton trade for four or five years, and the result is that it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the capital of the cotton trade is gone, and that the trade as a whole is insolvent. If at high 'Change on any Tuesday, every person on the Rialto could be made to give an accurate valuation of his assets, and a full statement of his liabilities, we are afraid that the result would show a balance to the bad. Not all the wealth of the merchants and bankers and capitalists who might chance to be there would serve to buoy up the dead weight of the country producers. So bad is it that that interesting human insect the Money-Bug bids fair to become extinct from lack of wherewithal to pasture on, and in its place arises into violent activity that two-legged vermin, of even lower type, the Failure-Gloater. That active creature is abroad, winking and nodding and whispering and hinting disaster; living on ascertained misfortunes, crowing over the fallen, assisting the tottering to collapse, and even shaking the sound. The most simple and primary law of political economy has been violated systematically for weeks and months and years. The great Cotton Trade has acted and is acting as a country hen-wife, a London costermonger, or a street newspaper boy would feel themselves degraded as intelligent entities by pursuing. They have doggedly persisted in producing a supply where there was no demand. The inevitable result of that is ruin in every commodity of barter, sale, or hire, from baked potatoes or curates up to diamonds or prime ministers; and no one will be bold enough to deny that as far as the Cotton Trade is concerned this initial law is painfully asserting its supremacy.

Whence arises this absence of demand? Demand in the healthiest states of commerce will fluctuate. It may be disturbed for a time by causes quite outside the circle of trade. War, financial embarrassments, political embroglios, foreign revolutions, deficient harvests at home or abroad, may check for a time the steady current of demand. Or it may be that the diminution of demand is but the precursor of total extinction. In the Cotton Trade none of these causes operate. There is no war, neither is there revolution; except in South America, the world is in external and internal peace; money is superabundant and the harvests are good; while, as regards the extinction of demand, one-half of the entire human race is sparsely clad or totally unclothed. But demand and price go hand in hand, and it has been abundantly proved that, as gold can be bought too dear, so there is a price at which demand diminishes, and another scale at which it diminishes still further, and, there is no doubt, a point at which total cessation of demand would be arrived at. The products of our mills are too dear for the ideas of our customers; and this leads to our third question:—

Why are our products too dear? Spend a day in rambling through our Rialto, and you will hear but one answer to this question; the same answer you would have heard anytime these last four years, you will hear in all the variations of our local Doric. The energetic Mr. Mumps, of Oldham, will tell you, with a copious sprinkling of expletives, that "This here's the state of the case. This here cotton's too dear, by one-half. The whole difficulty lies in this here. Mak brass by spinning with cotton at elevenpunce! Can we the d——l as like!" Our esteemed friend and contributor, Mr. Councillor Semiterry, of Snigbruck, will say at once, "Th' long an' shurt of th' matter is, as cotton is too dear. Th' owd governor allus fought shy of forties over eleven pence, and he thowt nowt of a shilling a cut profit; and we're losin' as mich now, and shall, so lung's cotton's where it is, and that's the real truth—it is, for sure." That there cannot be a fair trade, unless cotton be reduced one-fourth of its value; nor a really prosperous one, till it fall one-half, is admitted by everyone interested—spinner, manufacturer, agent, merchant, banker, and cotton broker, all alike, with one voice.

How can the price of cotton be reduced? Only two methods are possible: one is, that there should be such a supply as will afford employment to all the spindles of the world, and a good margin for stock, beyond; and the other is, that its consumption should be curtailed till the same result is brought about. Is there the slightest chance of the former remedy taking effect for at least a year or two? No one even affects to imagine it. SHORT TIME—even, in some cases, to total stoppage—IS THE ONLY CURE OPEN TO THE TRADE. The remedy is in every man's hands. It is of no use abusing Liverpool or attacking buyers; each man has his own protection in his own power. Let him simply do as every retail trader in the kingdom does—regulate his supply to his demand. If he cannot sell his total production at cost price, let him produce one-half; if he cannot sell one-half, let him make one-fourth; if he cannot sell that fourth, let him make nothing at all. If the trade be conducted on these principles, a few weeks would establish an equilibrium.

This naturally introduces our last inquiry. These things being so, the situation being so grave, the crisis so pressing, the cause so palpable, the remedy so clear, why does not the trade, both individually and collectively, resort to Short Time of a very stringent nature?

Space will not admit of our even entering on this large topic now. In common with the other topics we have only just touched upon, we shall recur to it in our next. Meanwhile the *Sphinx* says to the trade, in all solemnity, by way of temporary adieu:—

"Short time is your only cure. Adopt it as you would cut off a mortifying limb. It is a cruel process, but the only path that saves honour, and leads to future prosperity. If you are solvent, and have a margin of your own, stop in time, and save it; work on, and, as sure as sunset follows sunrise, and as 2 and 2 make 4, it will go. If you are not solvent now, suspend, like a man; fail honourably, and do not seek to gamble yourself back into solvency, on the money of your creditors. Apart from its inherent dishonesty, this course is suicidal, and can only hasten your own dishonourable bankruptcy, and speed the ruin of your solvent neighbours. If you are one of the very few exceedingly wealthy producers who can stand constant loss for a lengthened period, remember that you have duties to yourself as a trader, and to the nation as a citizen; and rest assured, that every day you carry on a losing commerce, you are a foolish trader and a

bad citizen. Above all, if you are one of those who, being a professed Christian, have dared to think the evil thought, or even to speak the evil speech, which a pagan at his gladiatorial excesses would have blushed to think or utter, 'I will take advantage of this crisis to sweep away poorer competitors from my path—I will crush my smaller neighbours into extinction'—down on your knees, and repent! for the curse of God is on you and yours, and over the trade which numbers you among its members."

A WATCH NIGHT.

THREE minutes past twelve; and the first sound that reaches my ear is a far-off cock-crowing. A peculiarly quarrelsome, or unusually silly fowl, that must be. Everything is painfully quiet, and the slightest noise makes it distinctly heard. Natural philosophy taught me that such distinctness was to be expected and how to account for it; but it is not easy to realize without actual experience. I can hear the ticking of the watch over the head of the bed, and sometimes of that in my pocket, whilst the striking of the clock in the room beneath raises a din loud enough to upset one's nerves. The gas quietly hisses and simmers, with a murmur not unlike that of a distant waterfall, or of a sea-shell; and every collapse of the burning coals in the grate is exaggerated into a noise suggestive of the upsetting of a heavy laden cart, and causes me to turn my eyes to the pale-faced invalid, fearful that his fitful doze may have been disturbed. But the heavy breathing, of which every gasp is awfully short and loud, goes on uninterruptedly. The footfall of the solitary passer-by sounds hollow and unnatural. I can hear it from the other end of the street, gradually coming nearer and nearer, till it passes under the window, and as slowly and gradually the sound grows dimmer, sinks into a faint echo, and dies away. Wonder where the man has been to, and what he has been doing. Shocking cough he had. Little he thinks that some one is counting his footsteps, or that his troublesome cough is prominent among the ghostly sounds of night. Here comes a cab. Somebody in it who is too idle or too timid to walk; or, possibly, the occupant has been dining, and in consequence dare not draw too largely upon his ambulatory resources. If so, he is very likely asleep, and will require a shaking when he reaches his destination. How the wretched vehicle rattles over the stones, not only shaking the window, but seeming to make every brick about the place quiver and tremble. The patient seems to have felt something of the disturbance, for he turns half round and moans.

Two o'clock. I believe I am growing sleepy. Must stand up. The fire is gradually sinking. What a noise the confounded coals make; they seem to have some sort of spite against me, and when I try to extract a lump, tumble over each other most merrily and noisely, as if having a game at romps among themselves. I wish that watch would cease ticking. Queer stories that I used to hear about the "death-tick," which would make itself heard in all sorts of impossible places in the sick room just before the end. Two people are coming down the street, very noisy in their laughter and talk. I should say they must be of the "jolly dog" type; and, from the vigour with which they keep declaring that "they won't go home till morning," it will very likely be no injustice to suppose that they have been sacrificing at the shrine of Bacchus. Wonder if they have got latch-keys, or if somebody is waiting up for them. Possibly, some are listening for their footsteps, and the noise, which is a nuisance to me, may be welcome and reassuring to anxious hearts. They seem to be parting at the corner, and go off shouting.

Only three o'clock. The last hour was dreadfully long. Wish it were morning. Will try to read. Somehow it is very hard to settle down to anything. What's that? Only the howling of a moon-struck dog. The sign of a death, people say. I really am growing nervous to be startled by such a trifle. The yell has roused our next door neighbour's retriever into a fit of defiant barking. I shall invest in some prussic acid to-morrow, if that goes on. Some one passing very slowly; that must be a policeman. There he is examining the door, and now proceeds with a dignified and stately march. Is the patient waking? No; only another restless half-turn. How horridly his teeth gleam, and how shrunken his face. I fear he will never be himself again. The doctor looked awfully grave last night. A dear good fellow he has always been; how much better than some of us who are left. Life will never be quite the same to some of us when he is gone.

I really believe I have been dozing. Five o'clock. I must have slept for half-an-hour. Now there are signs of the beginning of another day. A market cart passes, and produces a miniature earthquake. By and by a little lad in clogs trots briskly along, whistling by fits and starts. He has, no doubt, one hand in his pocket, and with the other is holding his morning repast. Very cold and wretched it must be, yet he seems quite happy and comfortable. His whistle is so curiously lonely, suggesting the first timid attempt of the very earliest bird in the country. Soon a pattering of more numerous feet tells of the approach of work-time. A gentle tapping at the door, and I know my watch is over.

A CLERICAL ELECTION.

WE flattered ourselves we had heard the last of elections for a long and blessed time to come. We were mistaken. Manchester, or, to speak more precisely, Ardwick, has been the scene of another election. On Monday last was fought another electoral battle. There was a nomination which, *minus* the hustings, and *plus* a great deal more decorum, was conducted pretty much after the fashion of the Albert Square farce of November 16th. The electors seem to have been divided into two factions, each faction having two candidates, each candidate a proposer and seconder, according to due and proper political precedent. We are not informed by the papers whether or no a show of hands was taken; but, at any rate, a poll ensued; the votes of the electors were recorded, collected, and published; and the result was the complete triumph of one faction, and no less complete discomfiture of the other—that is to say, the former carried both its candidates. It will be noticed from the above remarks that we were not eye-witnesses of the contest. It would never have entered into our mind to apply for admission, nor were we aware that even a reporter was allowed to be present, until, on Tuesday morning, we opened our *Examiner*, our *Guardian*, and our *Courier*, and found a quarter, half, and whole column, respectively, devoted to the election of Proctors for the Archdeaconry of Manchester.

We confess, candidly, that, until this week, we had but very vague ideas as to these said proctors. The extent of our knowledge amounted to this, that they were the members of convocation sent up from each diocese; while, as to convocation itself, it seemed to us a kind dispensation of Providence whereby the whole body of the clergy, debarred from entering the House of Commons, might amuse themselves with a parliament of their own. The principal business of this mock parliament appeared to consist in perpetually adjourning. Occasionally there was a burst of discussion, as in the case of Bishop Colenso; but, no appreciable result following, we further concluded that convocation was merely a large clerical debating society, whereat parsons of all shades and opinions might knock one another about in wordy contests, and keep up that forensic eloquence which they formerly displayed in the Oxford and Cambridge Unions.* Now, however, and since the reports of this proctorial election, we have taken a deeper interest in the subject. It appears that the diocese of Manchester returns five proctors to con-

* Let not the reader be staggered. The "unions" referred to are not workhouses, but debating clubs.

vocation: one representing the Cathedral Chapter; two, the Archdeaconry of Lancaster; two, that of Manchester. It was the election of these last which took place on Monday.

As to the electors, we find that there are, in round numbers, some 300 benefices in the archdeaconry, and, consequently, 300 voters. The number of votes recorded on this occasion was 437; from whence it would appear that each elector has two votes, and that, making allowance for plumpers, about 200 were present and voted. But, perhaps, a curious reader may ask, are there not a goodly number of curates besides these 300 rectors and vicars. Yea, verily! The *Diocesan Church Calendar* gives 214 as their number for the whole diocese; and, of these, the greater portion must, undoubtedly, be serving in this, the largest and most populous archdeaconry; say 150, at the very least. But listen, oh! sympathising Reform Legue, Union, & Co.!—listen, Miss Becker and Dr. Pankhurst!—the curate has no voice or lot in the matter. If voting be a privilege, and the curate a man of any standing, and as much entitled to all clerical privileges as the, perhaps younger, rector, surely this state of things is an anomaly and a scandal. There are curates in this diocese of ten years' standing, and upwards; surely, their lot is hard enough, without such absurd and (*to them*, no doubt) galling distinctions being made between their own poor selves and their more fortunate brethren. At any rate, we think and say so.

But to come back to Monday's election. It is somewhat strange to a lay mind, to find that the nomination, speechifying, and polling took place in St. Thomas's Church, Ardwick. Why a church, in the name of all that is curious? True enough, the proceedings were commenced with a religious service, and ended with an episcopal benediction; but, with all due respect, voting is voting, and speech-making is speech-making all the world over; and we must be allowed to doubt whether even the clerical mind could fail to be excited with worldly emotions at such a time, and whether, altogether, it would not have been better to do the voting in the Town Hall adjacent, while the service might still have been held in the building which we laymen suppose to be strictly devoted to prayer and praise.

The bishop presided, and a jewel of a president he seems to have been, wielding his sceptre in right *princely*† fashion. Whatever may be thought or said of his lordship, no one can deny that he makes a capital chairman, holding the meeting, speakers and all, well in hand, and letting them all feel that it is no novice who handles the ribbons. On the present occasion he commenced by requesting "that there should be as few remarks as possible made" by the proposers and seconders (would to goodness that the same broad hint were expressed and attended to at all meetings), and then went on to declare that he did "not think it right or seemly that a meeting like the present should be degraded into anything like a debating club." Rather hard upon those gentlemen who had their speeches ready, and the clergy have so much of their own way in the pulpit that it must be a new sort of thing altogether to be pulled up in this way. His lordship concluded by counselling them again to act "with caution, moderation, and dignity, reiterating this advice as if he very much feared the result, and considered it rather a pity that they were allowed any action at all. Indeed, it would seem as if his lordship had some grounds to dread the behaviour of his unruly flock, for no sooner had he sat down, than up rose Canon Hornby, one of the candidates, and protested against his lordship's sitting there at all. "He reserved his right" (so says the *Guardian*), to protest, we presume, against the result of the election if it should happen to go against him, as it undoubtedly did, for he stood lowest on the poll. He may have been right, or he may have been wrong in his protest, but we cannot help thinking that it implied a consciousness of weakness to protest at all. Anyhow, right or wrong, the bishop was not to be unseated. He put the canon down on the spot, refused to receive the protest, and ordered the election to go on. It recurs to us to wonder whether Mr. Burder acts "Joseph" to the bishop on such occasions, and whether it would not be worth while to offer our Mayor's factotum to his lordship, on the next proctorial election. However, the protest was set aside for the time, but it appears that an election petition will be presented to the Archbishop of York, on the two-fold pretext that the Bishop of Manchester had no right to preside, nor to restrain the tongues of the clergy present. And then ensued eight speeches,—necessarily short, though as to their sweetness we are afraid it bore the same proportion as the sugar coating does to a pill. And Canon Hornby's protest had evidently had no effect on the Bishop. His lordship was ready with his rod, and brought it down next on the Rev. W. N. Molesworth, son of his ancient enemy the Vicar of Rochdale, and chronicler of the Reform Bill of 1832. Mr. Molesworth inadvertently alluded to a "committee." We suppose there *are* committees for the purpose of returning members to convocation, but they are evidently unmentionable in such places as St. Thomas's, Ardwick, at election time; and Mr. Molesworth had to withdraw the word and proceed on another tack. With this exception the four proposers and four seconders got through their work in fine style. It does not appear that the candidates addressed the meeting, The poll was taken, and the Reverends J. Burchall and Jas. Bardsley won the day. Their opponents, Canons Hornby and St. Vincent Beechey, must be content with private life, unless the "protest" prospers. And so the election ended; and the voters dispersed, to the amazement, we should think, of the honest folk of Ardwick, who must have seen more white chokers in half-an-hour than they had most of them done in the course of their natural lives.

According to all accounts, the contest was one of High Church *versus* Low, and the Low have triumphed. We vex ourselves not with clerical shibboleths; but, on the principle of grace to the conquered, we venture to express a wish that the Church had many more such scholars and gentlemen in her ranks as Canon Beechey. With regard to Canon Hornby, it appears that the opposition to him mainly arose from his having presented some ritualistic petition, or declaration, in Convocation. Upon this we would simply remark that, if a member of the House of Commons were to be identified with the contents of every petition he presented, there would be fewer petitions brought into the House than there are at present. The Ritualists, we imagine, have as good a right to lay their petitions, or what not, before Convocation as any other sect or party. Anyhow, Canon Hornby appears to have paid dearly for a slight offence.

Whether Convocation will ever be of real, living use to the Church; whether its members will unite to cast aside minor and unimportant differences for the great common good; whether hard-working curates will have their votes,—yes, and perhaps lay members and communicants of the church also;—yes and again, whether the Bishop of Lichfield's scheme of combined clerical and lay synods will not be ultimately applied to Convocation itself;—and whether these changes would not be very much for the better, we leave to time and reform to decide for us.

† The Right Reverend J. Prince Lee has so often had his name played upon, that he will not object to the bringing up again of an old pun.

[By Telegraph.]

Latest Bulletin respecting Mr. Bright.—*Boreal* of Trade.

A(p)peal to the Constituencies.—Church Wardens' rejoicings over Conservative successes.

Humourous Agricultural Implement.—A machine for *cutting* chaff.

LINES TO A FLY.

[From Carols of Cockayne, by Henry S. Leigh.]

It's a singular fact that whenever I order
My goblet of Guinness or bumper of Bass,
Out of ten or a dozen that sport round the border
Some fly turns a summersault into my glass.
Oh! it's not that I grudge him the liquor he's tasted
(Supposing him partial to ale or to stout),
But consider the time irretrievably wasted
In trying to fish the small wanderer out.

Ah! believe me, fond fly, 'tis excessively sinful,
This habit which knocks even bluebottles up;
Just remember what Cassio, on getting a skinful,
Observ'd about "ev'ry inordinate cup!"
Reflect on that proverb, diminutive being,
Which tells us "enough is as good as a feast:"
And, mark me, there's nothing more painful than seeing
An insect behaving so much like a beast.

Nay, in vain would you seek to escape while I'm talking,
And shake from your pinions the fast clinging drops,
It is only too clear, from your efforts at walking,
That after your malt you intend to take hops.
Pray, where is your home? and oh! how shall you get there?
And what will your wife and your family think?
Pray, how shall you venture to show the whole set there
That Paterfamilias is given to drink?

Oh, think of the moment when conscience returning
Shall put the brief pleasure of Bacchus to flight;
When the tongue shall be parch'd and the brow shall be burning,
And most of to-morrow shall taste of to-night!
For the toast shall be dry and the tea shall be bitter,
And all through your breakfast this thought shall intrude;
That a little pale brandy and Seltzer is fitter
For such an occasion than animal food.

I have known, silly fly, the delight beyond measure—
The blissful sensation, prolonged and intense—
The rapturous, wild, and ineffable pleasure,
Of drinking at somebody else's expense.
But I own—and it's not without pride that I own it—
Whenever some friend in his generous way
Bids me drink without paying, I simply postpone it,
And pay for my liquor the whole of next day!

A Talk with Rossini.—Rossini lived in the winter in a corner house of the Boulevards, and in the summer at his villa at Passy, where he expired. Many of his friends remember how within a year or two he might be seen walking on the Boulevards, with his old companion Carafa, or anyone he picked up, enjoying the sunlight, and making his notes on the pretty women who passed; for, like the gallant Auber, he was susceptible of the charms of beauty, and used to say, "Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold." I remember, says a Paris correspondent, a conversation with Rossini during one of these morning walks some six years ago, which I thought at the time was highly interesting. I reminded him of a Neapolitan *impresario* having told me that he shut him up in the Palazzo Barbaja until he completed one of his many works brought out at St. Carlo, as he could not depend upon him as regarded time if allowed to live with his friends. This led to a conversation about the Italian lyrical drama, in which the great composer bestowed much admiration on the melodious genius of Bellini, Donizetti, Pacini, and others, whose works, as he added, "have given so many million hours of happiness to so many millions of mankind." With how much greater force would this apply to the author of "Il Barbiere!" Rossini was shy of speaking about Verdi, I thought. He admired, however, his dramatic genius, his intensity, and his gift for producing original and beautiful melody. He then wandered off into a condemnation about writing music which exhausted and wore out the human voice. It was "an error to storm the mind with sweet sounds," and the quality of all voices lost colour when stretched too much. He lamented the falling off in the Italian school of singing, and said that the men and women of our day did not study as they ought to study previous to coming before the public. This was the only time I could ever get Rossini to speak about musical matters.

WINDOW CURTAINS.

CURTAINS were originally hung across windows or doors, not for the sake of ornament alone, but to exclude cold and draughts. They were suspended by little rings, which slipped easily over a stout metal rod, perhaps an inch or an inch-and-a-half in diameter. Of course, between such a rod (stretched across the top of the window) and the ceiling, a small space must intervene; and therefore, to prevent the chance of wind blowing through in this direction, a boxing of wood became necessary, in front of which a plain valance was hung, sometimes cut into a vandyke-shaped pattern at its lowest edge, but generally unplaited. As for the curtains themselves, when not in use, they hung straight down on either side, of sufficient length to touch, but not to sweep the ground. Now, observe how we have burlesqued this simple and picturesque contrivance in our modern houses. The useful and convenient little rod has grown into a huge lumbering pole, as think as a man's arm, but not a whit stronger than its predecessor; for the pole is not only hollow, but constructed of metal far too thin in proportion to its diameter. Then, in place of the little finials which used to be fixed at each end of the rods, to prevent the rings from slipping off, our modern upholsterer has substituted gigantic fuchsias, or other flowers, made of brass, gilt bronzes, and even china, sprawling downwards in a design of execrable taste. Sometimes this pole, being too weak for actual use, is fixed up simply for ornament—or rather, let me say, for pretending show—while the curtain really slides on an iron rod *behind* it. Instead of the wooden boxing and valance, a gilt cornice, or canopy, is introduced, contemptible in design and worse than useless in such a place; for not only does it afford, from the nature of its construction, no protection against the draught behind, but being made of thin, sharp-edged metal, it is liable to cut and fray the curtain which it crowns. The curtains themselves are made immoderately long, in order that they may be looped up in clumsy folds over two-eccentric looking pegs, which bear some resemblance to a small railway buffer on either side of the window. The worst of this needless and ugly complication is that the curtains are seldom drawn; dust gathers thickly in their folds, the stuff is prematurely worn out, and comfort as well as artistic effect is sacrificed to meet an upholsterer's notions of elegance.—*Hints on Household Taste, by C. L. Eastlake.*

Lancashire Independent College.—In the article on the Independent College, at Withington, in last week's *Sphinx*, an error in the punctuation caused an apparent mis-statement of facts. The opening sentences of the last paragraph in the second column, page 155, should read:—"The college has been and is still associated in its professoriate with names of literary mark and celebrity. Among them we may notice the Rev. Dr. Vaughan and, as a preacher, the Rev. Dr. Halley. The present professor of theology and moral philosophy, and president of the college, is Mr. Henry Rogers, the author of *The Eclipse of Faith*."

Value of Land in the Lake District. An estate on the shores of Windermere, situated on the lower or southern reach of the lake, about midway between Bowness and Newby-bridge, was sold by auction last week by Mr. Edward Burton, of Kendal. It is known as Tower Wood, and consists of a dwelling house, out-buildings, and about 120 acres of land. From the rarity of the offer, there was considerable competition, and eventually the estate was knocked down for £3,100.

NOTHING LIKE LEATHER.

WE have recently had the privilege of being present at one of those festive reunions of employers and employed about which we occasionally hear, but very seldom see, and it is a phase of social life we would like to see much more general. We give a brief description of what we saw and heard thereat. In that classic region of our city known as Red Bank, are the works of a firm of leather factors well known by the name of England's greatest naval hero. One of the members of the firm having just taken to himself a wife, his partners determined that, amid the general rejoicings consequent on "the happy event," the work-people should have their share. Announcement was accordingly made that a holiday and dinner-party for every worker would be granted; so that, while the happy couple were enjoying their honeymoon, all others concerned might, in a feast of beef and flow of bowl, wish them health and happiness. In one of the rooms of the large warehouse a portion of space was partitioned, so as to form a spacious dining-hall. The workers had evidently worked with a will, on the principle of many hands making light work, for the room was tastefully decorated with curiously-wrought evergreens, engravings, banners, and mottoes. Special gas-fittings had been introduced, which threw light and cheerfulness on all around—a small matter, but very important to ensure success on all festive occasions. The various kinds of hides, tanned and finished in the works, from the horse, buffalo, cow, sheep, &c., were used as a portion of the wall decorations; and upon one huge buffalo-hide were fancifully grouped the different implements used by the workers in producing the finished article of leather. Among the mottoes were, as might be expected, "There's nothing like leather," "Prosperity to the firm," and "The feet warm and the head cool"—evidently a double-sole allusion. One curiously arranged motto, in different coloured letters of lamb-skin, took a higher flight, for, referring to the newly-married couple, it said, "May they ever be happy, and fond affections round them twine." As to the dinner, we can only say it had a generous bill of fare, and was evidently heartily enjoyed. The cloth having been removed, one of the firm took the chair, and, having seen that ever man had his jorum of punch, or whatever else he liked best, at once proceeded to business, by giving the usual loyal toasts. Then we had singing and reciting by some of the workers, followed by more toasts, relieved, now and again, by a humorous speech or reading by one of the firm, Mr. Brian Tee; a song, charmingly sung by the fair sister of the bridegroom, and a couple of Lancashire recitations by a friend of Mr. B. T. The great charm of the evening lay in the homely speeches and songs of the workmen. Songs, with a good hearty chorus, in which all might join, were the most popular; and in the event of a singer breaking down in his song, he would very coolly say "Hello! theer's a hole i'th ballet—aw mun start again," the audience at once repeating the chorus, until he had patched up the hole; while, when a song had been successfully completed, there were generally cries of "ankore," "go it, Joe," "wire in, Joe," "chorus, lads." The various styles of commencing the speeches were note-worthy, *e.g.*, "Worthy chair and vice-chair," "Fellow-shopmates and chairman," "Mr. Vice, Mr. Chair, and ladies and gentlemen all." In brief, a hearty feeling of kindly co-operation between employers and workers was shown abundantly, not only in speeches, but in every way throughout this very happy evening.

THE LARGEST KITCHEN IN THE WORLD.

IN former days the kitchen of the London Reform Club, where dinners are prepared in the season for some 400 to 500 gentlemen on an evening, was considered a sort of sight, and the kitchen establishments of other first-class London clubs and hotels may be equally worth looking at. But every kitchen in the world, existing now and having existed before, disappears in magnitude if compared to Liebig's Extract of Meat Company's Establishment at Fray Bentos, on the River Uruguay, South America. The Buenos Ayres *Standard*, of 3rd September last, gives the following particulars: The new factory is a building that covers about 20,000 square feet, and is roofed in iron and glass. We first enter a large hall flagged with the best Scotch flags, kept dark, cool, extremely clean, where the meat is weighed, and passed through apertures to the meat cutting machines. We come to the beef-cutting hall, paved also with Scotch flags, spacious, airy, and well lighted. Here are four powerful meat-cutters, specially designed by the Company's General Manager, Mr. Giebert; each machine can cut the meat of 200 bullocks per hour. The meat being cut is passed to "digerators" made of wrought iron, each one holds about 12,000 lbs. of beef; there are nine of these digerators, and three more have yet to be put up. Here the meat is digerated by high pressure steam of 75 lb. per square inch, from this the liquid which contains the extract and the fat of the meat proceeds in tubes to a range of "fat separators" of peculiar construction. Here the fat is separated in the hot state from the extract, as no time can be lost for cool operations, otherwise decomposition would set in in a very short time. We proceed downstairs to an immense hall, 60 feet high, where the fat separators are working. Below them is a range of five cast-iron clarifiers, 1,000 gallons each, worked by high pressure steam through Hallett's tube system. Each clarifier is provided with a very ingenious steam tap; in the monstrous clarifiers the albumen and fibrine and phosphate magnesia are separated. From hence the liquid extract is raised by means of air pumps, driven by two 30-horse power engines, up to two vessels about twenty feet above the clarifiers; from thence the liquid runs to the other large evaporators. Now we ascend the staircase reaching the hall, where two immense sets of four vacuum apparati are at work, evaporating the extract by a very low temperature. Here the liquid passes several filtering processes before being evaporated in vacuum. We now ascend some steps and enter the ready making hall, separated by a wire gauze wall, and all windows, doors, &c., guarded by the same to exclude flies and dust. Here again we notice the splendid Scotch flags. The ventilation is maintained by patent fans, and the place is extremely clean. Here are placed five ready making pans, constructed of steel plates with a system of steel discs, revolving in the cooling liquid extract, accelerating the evaporating process, invented by the Company's General Manager. These five pans, by means of the discs, one hundred in each pan, effect in one minute more than two million square feet of evaporating surface. Here concludes the manufacturing process. The extract is now withdrawn in large cans and deposited for the following day. Ascending a few steps we enter the decrystallizing and packing hall, where two large cast-iron tanks are placed, provided with hot water baths under their bottoms. Into these tanks the extract is thrown in quantities of 10,000 lbs. at once, and is here decrystalised and made a homogeneous mass, and of uniform quality. Samples are now taken and carefully analysed by the chemist of the establishment, Dr. Seckamp, the representative of Baron Liebig, under whose charge the chemical and technical operations are performed. We witnessed in the afternoon the cleansing of the establishment, water cocks in all corners, torrents pouring in from all sides—in an instant the whole place was cleansed, the water washing down into large drains built of brick and cement, which empty into the river, cleanliness being one of the chief objects in every department of this splendid factory. It should be mentioned that the company's butcher kills at the rate of eighty oxen per hour, separating by a small double-edged knife the vertebræ from the cerebræ, the animal drops down instantaneously on a waggon, and is conducted to a place where 150 men are occupied dressing the meat for the factory, cutting each ox into six pieces; 400 are being worked per day.

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Rates of Premium and Conditions.—The rates will be found fully as moderate as those charged by other first-class companies. The English is not bound by the restrictions of the combined offices.
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Moderate Premiums. Fixed and liberal surrender values of not less than 35 per cent.—A few Agencies vacant.—Apply to
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Tea, Coffee, Chops, Steaks, &c.
Soups and Cold Collation throughout the day.
Wines, Spirits, Ale, and Stout of the best quality.
Quick service.
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Pastry, 3d.
Soups, 6d.
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Joints, 9d. and 1s.
Celery and Cheese, 3d.
Salad and Cheese, 3d.
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